
Welcome to the Best Beginnings STARS to Quality Family and Group Matrix.
This booklet is designed for licensed centers serving children 0-12 years of age.



Family and Group



For more information, visit www.bestbeginnings.mt.gov.

STAR 1

- **Employees working less than 160 hours annually or less than 10 hours per week (not to exceed 160 hours annually) are exempt from trainings and Practitioner Registry requirements at this level.**

★ EDUCATION, QUALIFICATIONS & TRAINING

Practitioner Registry

Director (DIR) and all caregiving staff (DIR, ACG, SUB) current on the Practitioner Registry at any level.

STAR 1 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

STARS Readiness Training (2 hours)

The Director (DIR) and caregiving staff (ACG) must complete this course. It is available through the Child Care Resource & Referral CCR&R Agencies.

STARS Mandatory Reporting Training (3 hours)

All staff (DIR, ACG) must complete this course. It is available through www.ChildCareTraining.org or through the CCR&R with a Child Care Licensor.

- If a staff person, including substitutes, is ever alone with children, they are required to take this course and are not exempt due to the hours worked rule.

MT Medication Administration I (3 hours)

This course must be completed by the director (DIR) and caregivers (ACG), and any other staff person that administers medication. The Director is responsible for documentation of the licensing-required form, medication being stored properly, and implementation of all other course requirements and regulations. If an employee of the program is the parent of an enrolled child and has not taken the course, they are allowed to administer medication to their own child only, following all licensing rules and regulations. This course is available online at www.ChildCareTraining.org.

MT DPHHS Immunization Training (1 hour)

This course must be completed by any staff who are responsible for reviewing immunization records. It is available at www.dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/immunization/childcare.

★ LEADERSHIP & PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

Program Management

Programs must complete a Program Profile in the STARS Application & Approval site.

Emergency Preparedness

Program has a documented emergency preparedness plan and process.

Go Kits are available in case of emergency.

★ HIGH QUALITY SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENTS

Daily Health Checks and Special Needs Health Care Plan

The program must have documentation that Daily Health Checks are taking place.

The program must have documentation of Special Needs Health Care Plan (if needed) for children.

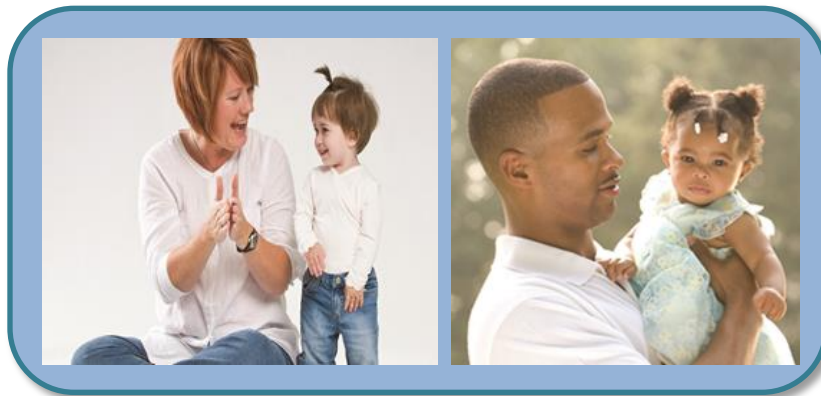
Safe Sleep

If licensed for infants Back to Sleep materials posted in sleeping areas.

★ FAMILY/COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

High Needs

Programs must serve a minimum 10% high needs children. Refer to the Guidance Document for additional information.



STAR 2

- Employees working less than 160 hours annually or less than 10 hours per week (not to exceed 160 hours annually) are exempt from trainings and Practitioner Registry requirements at this level.
- Must meet all criteria for STAR 1 along with the following:

★ EDUCATION, QUALIFICATIONS & TRAINING

Practitioner Registry

Director (DIR) current on the Practitioner Registry at Level 2 or higher

Individualized Professional Development Plan

Director and caregivers (DIR, ACG) have an individualized written Professional Development Plan linked to the Knowledge Base. Individualized Professional Development plans must be updated annually.

STAR 2 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Entry Level Training (hours may vary)

The Director (DIR) has participated in an approved entry-level training which may include: BEST, CDA, BLOCKS, SOS, completion of the MT Apprenticeship program, or an Early Childhood Degree.

Business Administration Scale (BAS) Training (2 hours)

The Director (DIR) must complete this course. It is available through the CCR&R.

Pyramid Model: Promoting Social Emotional Competence and School Readiness in Young Children (8 hours)

Introduction to the Pyramid Model: Promoting Social Emotional Competence & School Readiness in Young Children (2 hours): Director and caregiving staff (DIR, ACG)

Montana Blended Pyramid Module 1 (6 hours) (Prerequisite Introduction): Director and caregiving staff (DIR, ACG)

- These courses are available through the CCR&R. The Introduction is also at www.ChildCareTraining.org.

Environment Rating Scale Training (3 hours)

The Director (DIR) must complete this course. It is available online at www.ChildCareTraining.org.

CPR/First Aid (8 hours)

All staff must be CPR/First Aid Certified (DIR, ACG, SUB, NPS).

Oral Health Training (2 hours)

Primary Caregivers (PCG) must complete this course. It is available online at www.ChildCareTraining.org.

MT Medication Administration II (3 hours)

This course must be completed by the Director (DIR) and any other staff that administers medication. The director is responsible for documentation of the licensing required form, as well as for medication being stored properly. If an employee of the program is the parent of an enrolled child and has not taken the course, they are allowed to administer medication to their own child only, following all licensing rules and regulations. This course is available through www.ChildCareTraining.org.

MT Medication Administration Refresher (4 hours)

Individuals must complete Medication Administration Refresher every 3 years after completing Medication Administration I and Medication Administration II. This course is available at www.ChildCareTraining.org.

★ STAFF/CAREGIVER-TO-CHILD RATIO & GROUP SIZE

Staffing Plan

A written staffing plan is in place assuring continuity of care (including a plan for substitute staff situations), appropriate adult to child ratios, appropriate group size, and that children are benefitting from having primary caregivers.

★ FAMILY/COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

High Needs

Programs must serve a minimum 10% high needs children. Refer to the Guidance Document for additional information.

Enrollment Process

A written enrollment process is in place that facilitates an exchange of information between the program and families, which works to assure strong partnerships. This process should include the following: description of the program and policies; family culture; and wishes around topics such as eating, sleeping, toileting, and discipline.

Child Care Contract

The program has a signed child care contract with each family. Topics in the contract will include, along with any required licensing policies, at least the following: hours, fees, payment policy, schedule, vacation, program closure, ill child and absence policy, responsibility for alternate care, and termination policy.

★ LEADERSHIP & PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

Licensing Regulations

All caregivers shall have available a copy of the State of MT DPHHS Licensing Requirements for Family and Group Day Care Homes—Including Infant Regulations.

Caregivers must sign off that they have received and read the licensing regulations.

★ HIGH QUALITY SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENTS

Food Service/M meal Coordination

All programs apply to participate in the Montana Child and Adult Care Food Program. This criteria is met if the program is currently participating in MT CACFP.

For all programs, at least 1 person is in charge of food service/meal coordination. Other staff can assist in this role.

If a program is not eligible for MT CACFP, the following indicators must be met:

- **MENUS POSTED**
Written menus must be posted for the current and future week at the entrance to the facility and visible to the public.
- **'DIVISION OF RESPONSIBILITY' in FEEDING**
Ellyn Satter Institute 'Division of Responsibility' is followed in meal services to children.
- **Special Dietary Needs Statement for Children and Protected Health Information form is completed for all children who require this.**

Support for Nursing Mothers

Breastfeeding is encouraged and the environment and program policies are designed to support this.

Montana Early Learning Standards

All staff have access to the MT Early Learning Standards (MELS). MELS can be ordered through ECSB or are available online at www.dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd/childcare/documents.

Self-Assessment

The Director will complete a self-assessment using both the Business Administration Scale (BAS) and the Environment Rating Scale (ERS) Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale—Revised (FCCERS-R).

A Quality Improvement Plan is written to address the findings of the self assessments, specifically addressing any subscale scores below a 3.0.

Immunization Review

Program has a policy and process in place for ensuring routine assessment of all enrolled children's immunization records at least every 6 months.

Pyramid Model: Promoting Social Emotional Competence and School Readiness in Young Children

Program staff will work to implement Module 1 topics using an evidenced-based coaching model.

STAR 3

- The trainings and Practitioner Registry status requirements at this level are required for employees working more than 1040 hours annually or working a minimum of 20 hours per week.
- An Assessor will be visiting the facility at this level.
- Must meet all criteria for STAR 1, STAR 2, and STAR 3 along with the following:

★ EDUCATION, QUALIFICATIONS & TRAINING

Practitioner Registry

Director (DIR) current on the Practitioner Registry at Level 3 or higher

50% of caregivers (ACG) are Level 2 or higher on the Practitioner Registry.

STAR 3 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Certified Infant Toddler Caregiver Course (CITC) (60 hours)

Director and caregivers (DIR, ACG) caring for infants and/or toddlers must be enrolled in (which is defined as currently taking the course or beginning the course in the quarter following application for STAR 3) or have completed the 60-hour course or its equivalent. This course is available through the CCR&R, UM-Western, Dawson Community College, Salish Kootenai College, or Flathead Valley Community College.

Certified Preschool Teacher Course (CPTC) (60 hours)

Director and caregivers (DIR, ACG) caring for ages 2 and up must be enrolled in (which is defined as currently taking the course or beginning the course in the quarter following application for STAR 3) or have completed the 60-hour course or its equivalent. This course is available through the CCR&R.

- This course can be waived if an individual is a Level 4 or higher on the Practitioner Registry. If the course is waived for this reason, the individual is not eligible to receive the Preschool Professional Development Incentive Award (PDIA). If an individual is enrolled in college courses or the MT Apprenticeship program that will result in being a Level 4 on the Registry within 2 years of application for STAR 3, this course can be waived.

** For Family and Group caregivers, both courses must be taken if licensed for 0-5. Consideration for which course is taken first could be based on the majority of children in care currently. Caregivers will have up to one (1) year to complete the other course in order to maintain a STAR 3. This must be included in the individual's Professional Development Plan, and turned in to ECSB with the required documents for STAR 3. ECSB will be tracking this to ensure completion within one (1) year. If licensed for ages 2 and up, a program would need to consider the developmental levels of the children in their care. As a result, a program may want to consider sending some staff to the Infant Toddler course, and some staff to the Preschool course. Documentation that includes rationale for this decision must be submitted for approval prior to application for STAR 3.

Pyramid Model Trainings (6 hours)

Montana Blended Pyramid Module 2 (Prerequisite Introduction and Montana Blended Module 1): Director and caregiving staff (DIR, ACG).

- It is available through the CCR&R.

★ FAMILY/COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

High Needs

Programs must serve a minimum 10% high needs children. Refer to the Guidance Document for additional information.

Community Resources

The program provides families with information regarding community resources. Examples of community resources may include: Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies, public library, city recreation department, housing authority, parent resource center, public health clinic, hospital, public schools, Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), Office of Public Assistance, county health department, family support agency, early intervention organizations such as: Hi-Line Home Programs, Inc., Developmental Educational Assistance Program (DEAP), Quality Life Concepts (QLC), Support & Techniques for Empowering People (STEP), Early Childhood Intervention (ECI), Family Outreach, Child Development Center (CDC).

Transitions

The program supports children and families while transitioning children into child care and out of child care into another educational setting.

Family Engagement

The program provides families with multiple opportunities for involvement such as: open house, opportunities to volunteer, social events, potluck meals, parent/family surveys, parent resource center.

★ LEADERSHIP & PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

Business Administration Scale (BAS) Assessment

The program will have a pre-assessment **for the first assessment only** at this level, completed by a STARS assessor.

Any subscale scores below a 3.0 for the pre-assessment must be addressed in the Quality Improvement Plan.

Subsequent assessments will be formal assessments, and programs must receive at least a 3.0 overall.

★ HIGH QUALITY SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENTS

Health & Safety

The program uses the STARS Health and Safety Assessment form to document health and safety policies, sanitation practices, food safety, medication administration, and safe sleep practices.

Program safety is documented through the use of the STARS Injury/Illness Prevention Checklist.

Family Style Meal Service

Adults, which includes caregivers and visitors, participate in family style meal service with the children that is developmentally appropriate for the children in care.

All meals are provided by the facility. (Foods and meals are not brought in from the outside except in cases of special dietary needs.

Immunization Review

Program must meet all criteria during the annual County Health Department review to receive the Certificate of Excellence. The Certificate of Excellence is awarded to child care facilities which are found to have all records

up-to-date for all children enrolled, and at least 90% of enrolled children up-to-date with immunization requirements. Please visit www.dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/immunization/childcare for more information regarding requirements.

Environment Rating Scale (ERS) Assessment

The program will receive a pre-assessment **for the first assessment only** at this level, completed with a STARS assessor, with the appropriate ERS scale (FCCERS-R).

Any subscale scores less than 3.0 for the pre-assessment must be addressed in the Quality Improvement Plan.

Subsequent assessments will be formal assessments, and programs must receive at least a 3.0 overall, with no sub-scales below a 2.0.

Pyramid Model: Promoting Social Emotional Competence and School Readiness in Young Children

The program will work to implement Pyramid Model Module 1 and Module 2 topics.

- Suggested Pyramid Model tools for implementation: Inventory of Practices-sections related to Modules 1 and 2 and the first two levels of the Pyramid.

Work with external coach to use *Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool* (TPOT for Preschool age) or *Teaching Pyramid Infant/Toddler Observation Scale* (TPITOS) as a guide for coaching and implementation. May request CCR&R coach to administer TPOT and/or TPITOS.

Director will communicate with families about the Pyramid Model using the brochure *Positive Solutions for Families*.



STAR 4

- The trainings and Practitioner Registry status requirements at this level are required for employees working more than 1040 hours annually or working a minimum of 20 hours per week.
- An Assessor will be visiting the facility at this level.
- Must meet all criteria for STAR 1, STAR 2, and STAR 3 along with the following:

★ EDUCATION, QUALIFICATIONS & TRAINING

Practitioner Registry

Director (DIR) current on the Practitioner Registry at Level 4 or higher.

50% of caregivers (ACG) are Level 2 or higher AND 25% are Level 3 or higher on the Practitioner Registry

STAR 4 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Introduction to the Montana Early Learning Standards

Director and caregivers (DIR, ACG) must complete the Introduction to the MT Early Learning Standards Course. This course will be available soon online at www.ChildCareTraining.org.

Inclusion Course (15 hours)

Director and caregivers (DIR, ACG) must complete Inclusion 1: Foundations for Inclusion (15 hours) or its equivalent. This course is available at www.ccplus.org.

- ED 391: Practicing Inclusion in Preschool Programs is a 3 credit course (45 hours) and is an acceptable equivalent for Inclusion I and Inclusion II. This course is available through UM-Western. Transcripts must be provided for this course.

Food Safety Course (8 hours)

Direct food service staff attends an approved Certified Food Safety Training, in addition to the CACFP required Training.

Pyramid Model (hours will vary)

Module 3 Overview (2 hours); **OR** Infant Toddler Module 3 (5 hours); **AND/OR** Preschool Module 3a & 3b (12 hours). These courses are available through the CCR&R.

- Coach and Director will determine the training needs of the program at this level, using a justification form.

★ FAMILY/COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

High Needs

Programs must serve a minimum 10% high needs children; after 3 renewals at STAR 4 the program must be serving 15%. Refer to the Guidance Document for additional information.

Conferences

The program offers, in addition to ongoing conversations, a meeting/conference with each child's family at least once per year. Together, the child's progress and needs are reviewed, and goals for the child are set.

Home/School Communication

Opportunities are available to facilitate exchange of information between the program and families, such as home/school journals or notebooks, bulletin boards, newsletters, parent advisory councils, parent volunteers, parent participation.

★ **LEADERSHIP & PROGRAM MANAGEMENT**

Business Administration Scale (BAS) Assessment

The program will have a formal assessment. The average score must be at least 4.0.

Any subscale scores below a 4.0 must be addressed in the Quality Improvement Plan.

★ **HIGH QUALITY SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENTS**

Curriculum

The program has a written curriculum plan that is aligned with the MT Early Learning Standards and Developmentally Appropriate Practice (2009, 3rd Ed. by Carol Copple & Sue Bredekamp, eds).

Observations

The program demonstrates that observations of the children and program are used to inform curriculum and environment in order to support the individual needs of children.

Environment Rating Scale (ERS) Assessment

Environment Rating Scale (ERS):

The program will receive a formal assessment by a STARS assessor with the FCCERS-R.

The average facility score must be at least 4.0 overall, along with the following subscale scores:

- Personal Care Routines: 3.0 or higher
- Activities: 4.0 or higher
- Listening & Talking: 4.0 or higher
- Interactions: 4.0 or higher

The finalized report will inform the Quality Improvement Plan. Any subscale scores below a 4.0 must be addressed in the Quality Improvement Plan.

Pyramid Model: Promoting Social Emotional Competence and School Readiness in Young Children

The program will continue to work toward full implementation of the Pyramid Model using Pyramid Model tools.

A 30 minute Introduction to the Pyramid Model: Promoting Social Emotional Competence and School Readiness in Young Children will be offered to parents by the program.

STAR 5

- The trainings and Practitioner Registry status requirements at this level are required for employees working more than 1040 hours annually or working a minimum of 20 hours per week.
- An Assessor will be visiting the facility at this level.
- Must meet all criteria for STAR 1, STAR 2, and STAR 3, and STAR 4 along with the following:

★ NAFCC ACCREDITATION

Programs must be NAFCC Accredited and maintaining criteria for accreditation.

★ EDUCATION, QUALIFICATIONS & TRAINING

Practitioner Registry

Director (DIR) current on the Practitioner Registry at Level 5 or higher

50% of caregivers (ACG) are current at Level 2 or higher AND 25% are current at Level 3 or higher on the Practitioner Registry

★ LEADERSHIP & PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

Business Administration Scale (BAS) Assessment

The program will have a formal assessment. The average score must be at least 5.0.

Any subscale scores below a 5.0 must be addressed in the Quality Improvement Plan.

Professionalism

Director/Owner is able and committed to contributing to the professionalism of the early childhood field, such as program/director mentoring, STARS mentoring, technical assistance, program-specific sliding fee scales, facilitating approved training at a conference, serving on a professional board, providing the Pyramid Model Parent Modules, etc.

★ HIGH QUALITY SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENTS

Health and Wellness

The program has established policies addressing the health and wellness of children, staff, and families.

Environment Rating Scale (ERS) Assessment

The program will receive a formal assessment by a STARS assessor with the FCCERS-R.

The average facility score must be at least 5.0 overall, along with the following subscale scores:

- Personal Care Routines: 4.0 or higher
- Activities: 5.0 or higher
- Listening & Talking: 5.0 or higher
- Interactions: 5.0 or higher

The finalized report will inform Quality Improvement Plan. Any subscale scores below a 5.0 must be addressed in the Quality Improvement Plan.

Pyramid Model: Promoting Social Emotional Competence and School Readiness in Young Children

The Pyramid Model will be fully implemented program-wide and maintained using Pyramid tools as needed, i.e. Benchmarks to Quality, Inventory of Practices, TPOT/TPITOS.

★ **FAMILY/COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS**

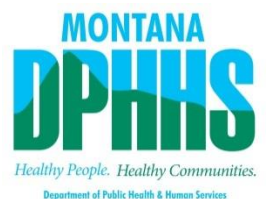
High Needs

Programs must serve a minimum 15% high needs children. Refer to the Guidance Document for additional information.





Family and Group



★ May 1, 2014